

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

OF

ABERYSTWYTH

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

1952

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

I. Morgan Watkin, Ph.D.(Lond.), M.Sc., M.B.,  
B.Ch., D.P.H.(Wales).

SANITARY INSPECTOR

D. G. Bowen, A.R.S.I.



To the Chairman and Members of the  
Aberystwyth Rural District Council.

It gives me pleasure to present to you the Annual Report of the Health Department for the year ended December 31st, 1952.

It is a matter for considerable satisfaction that, whereas in 1951 there were 211 deaths in the area, in 1952 the figure had dropped to 163. The fall is attributable to a marked reduction in deaths from heart disease. Cancer, on the other hand, shows no reduction in incidence over the previous year.

The number of births - 148 - has increased by 10 over the previous year. As in the previous year, it is gratifying to note that no death was ascribed to childbirth.

The number of infectious diseases has shown a marked decline. A case of paratyphoid fever at a school camp engaged the attention of the Health Department over August Bank Holiday and was eventually traced to a shop in South Wales. Suitable precautions were recommended to be taken by those who had been contacts. No further cases occurred.

Periodic visits were made to persons notified by the Welfare Authority as being in need of care and attention. Others were found upon inspection of the district.

Evidence was given at two enquiries held by the Minister of Housing and Local Government. The former related to the Blaenplwyf sewerage scheme and the latter, held in public, referred to the proposed new sewerage scheme for Llanbadarn Fawr and district. The nuisances existing in the two localities were shown to the Inspector during his tour of inspection.

Visits were paid to small water schemes which were yielding unsatisfactory results and the source of contamination sought. Proposed new supplies were examined and reported upon.



A variety of complaints was investigated. Most of these referred to housing defects but two were in a special category. The first marked "very urgent" stated that an individual had attempted to shoot the complainant the previous day and that it was only by diving into the brushwood that she had escaped with her life. The second was for the purpose of informing me that if the complainant died, I should know by whose hand his death had come about. There then followed an accusation of poisoning against a highly respected solicitor at Aberystwyth. The two complaints were discreetly investigated and the complainants in both cases were deemed to be insane.

Considerable progress was made upon housing sites during the year, but there is still a long road to tread before everybody in the district can be regarded as adequately housed. Progress was also made with water schemes, but, owing to the cuts in capital expenditure, little improvement in sewerage schemes was possible.

On the whole, however, the health of the community in 1952 as judged by vital statistics compared very favourably with that in the British Isles in general. It is, therefore, a consolation to us all that the chances of survival are as good in the Aberystwyth Rural District as anywhere in the United Kingdom!

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SUMMARY OF GENERAL AND VITAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres) .. .. .	140,728
Population (Census 1931) .. ..	11,132
Population (Mid-year 1952).. ..	10,890
Rateable value at 1st April, 1952.	£28,684
Sum represented by a penny rate	£115

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Number of registered live births (Leg.	142	77	65
(Illeg.	6	5	1
Number of registered still births (Leg.	2	1	1
(Illeg.	-	-	-
Number of registered deaths.	163	84	79
Number of deaths of women ascribed to childbirth	-	-	-
Number of deaths of infants under 1 year (Leg.	3	3	-
(Illeg.	2	2	-
Number of deaths of infants under 1 month (Leg.	2	2	-
(Illeg.	2	2	-

Areal comparability factor for births = 1.14

Areal comparability ~~factor~~ for deaths = 0.69

	<u>Aberystwyth</u> <u>R. D. C.</u>	<u>England and</u> <u>Wales</u>
Crude live birth rate per 1,000 estimated mid-year population .. .. .	13.59	15.3
Adjusted live birth rate per 1,000 estimated mid-year population .. .. .	15.49	-
Crude death rate per 1,000 estimated mid-year population .. .. .	15.0	11.3
Adjusted death rate per 1,000 estimated mid-year population. .. .. .	10.35	-





CAUSES OF DEATH, 1952.

<u>Registrar General's</u> <u>Code Number.</u>	<u>Disease</u>	<u>Number of Deaths.</u>
1	Respiratory tuberculosis	3
10	Malignant neoplasm, stomach	4
11	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1
12	Malignant neoplasm, breast	3
13	Malignant neoplasm, uterus	1
14	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms.	14
16	Diabetes	1
17	Vascular lesions of the nervous system	20
18	Coronary disease, angina	13
19	Hypertension with heart disease	1
20	Other heart disease	37
21	Other circulatory disease	4
23	Pneumonia	7
24	Bronchitis	12
25	Other diseases of the respiratory system	1
28	Nephritis and nephrosis	12
29	Hyperplasia of prostate	3
31	Congenital malformations	1
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	21
34	Accidents (other than motor vehicle)	2
35	Suicide	2
Total		163



General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

In addition to the general medical services provided by registered medical practitioners the following ancillary services are provided.

(a) An ante-natal and post-natal clinic is held fortnightly at Aberystwyth.

In those areas not readily accessible from Aberystwyth, expectant and nursing mothers receive medical advice from their own doctors.

(b) Infant welfare clinics are held fortnightly at the following centres:

Taliosin, Borth and Llanbadarn and weekly at Aberystwyth.

(c) The domiciliary midwifery service is carried out by the district nurse who is also a state registered nurse.

(d) One health visitor covers the northern half of the district and another the southern half.

(e) Home nursing is in the hands of the district nurse.

(f) Vaccination is carried out by the person's own medical attendant but immunisation against diphtheria is performed partly by the former and partly by medical officers of the local health authority.

(g) No ambulance is stationed in the Rural District. The headquarters of the ambulance service are situated in Aberystwyth from which four ambulances operate.

(h) Arrangements for the prevention of illness consist in periodic talks and advice given by the staff of the local health authority.

Care and after care is in the hands of the health visitor and the district nurse. Tuberculosis cases are also followed up by the Chest Physician's health visitor.

(i) Domestic help is provided by suitable persons engaged locally.

(j) The town of Aberystwyth is the centre upon which the principal general hospital in the county, the infectious diseases' hospital, the maternity home and the Medical Research Council's Area Public Health Laboratory are based.



INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following is a list of the notifications of infectious disease, other than tuberculosis, received during the year.

Cholera .. .. .	Nil
Diphtheria .. .. .	Nil
Dysentery (amoebic and bacillary) .. .. .	Nil
Encephalitis .. .. .	Nil
Erysipelas .. .. .	1
Food poisoning .. .. .	Nil
Malaria .. .. .	Nil
Measles .. .. .	75
Meningococcal meningitis .. .. .	Nil
Ophthalmia neonatorum .. .. .	Nil
Paratyphoid fever .. .. .	1
Plague .. .. .	Nil
Pneumonia (acute primary and acute influenzal)	Nil
Polionyelitis .. .. .	Nil
Puerperal pyrexia .. .. .	Nil
Relapsing fever .. .. .	Nil
Scarlet fever .. .. .	2
Smallpox .. .. .	Nil
Typhoid fever .. .. .	Nil
Typhus fever .. .. .	Nil
Whooping cough .. .. .	2



Notification was received late on August Bank Holiday Sunday that a member of a school camp had been taken seriously ill at Clarach with symptoms indicative of either severe food poisoning or of enteric fever. He was immediately removed to Tanybwlech hospital. The laboratory report confirmed that it was a case of paratyphoid fever. The incubation period, however, was a marginal one so that it was possible for the disease to have been contracted before leaving home or shortly after arrival at Aberystwyth or Clarach. Extensive sampling of all articles of food similar to those consumed was undertaken by the Aberystwyth Borough Health Department. All the results proved negative. By this time, however, numerous paratyphoid cases were occurring in the boy's home town and it was ascertained that the boy had consumed one of the suspected articles before leaving for Aberystwyth.

Two days later another boy from the camp suddenly went into convulsions and it was thought that this heralded a further case of paratyphoid fever. The convulsions, however, proved to be epileptic in origin. No further cases of paratyphoid fever occurred and the Health Department was satisfied that the source of infection lay far outside the Council's area.

Later in the summer, notification was received from the Medical Officer of Health of another South Wales district that a victim of paratyphoid fever had been staying for some time previously at Old Goginan. The house was visited in company with the Sanitary Inspector and detailed enquiries were made. Among other things, the water supply was investigated. This consisted of a well near the house and, when this ran low as it did in summer, a further supply which was piped from near a disused mine was brought into service. About a hundred yards higher than the water supply was found a W. C. which was sited over a little stream. Great difficulty was encountered in the dense undergrowth in ascertaining whether or not the stream which supplied the drinking water was the same as the one into which the W. C. drained. As one of the streams was used for drinking and was the sole supply in the immediate





vicinity, the use of dye tests to ascertain the water course proved out of the question. Eventually it was decided that there was no immediate connection between the stream receiving the W. C. contents and the drinking water.

Further investigations revealed that the paratyphoid fever had been acquired in South Wales, in all probability on the day of return from Goginan.

The above circumstances, nevertheless, serve to draw attention to the danger which exists where a W. C. or cesspool lies at a higher level and in close proximity to a supply of drinking water. Unless a pure supply is provided for Old Goginan and other houses or hamlets similarly placed in the Rural District, an outbreak of typhoid fever or of a similar illness is, in due course, almost a certainty.

# TUBERCULOSIS

During the year seven new cases of tuberculosis were notified to the

Department. The details are as follows:-

AGES

[illegible]



NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

Several cases were brought to my notice by the Welfare Officers and others. No compulsory action under the National Assistance Act was taken. Mention may be made of a few which are of particular interest.

Case (a) in the north of the District was discovered as a result of the tenant complaining about the state of the house. On visiting the premises the tenant was found to be living under deplorable conditions with the W. C. contents and the food mixed together on the scullery table. As the lady did not appear to be certifiable under the Lunacy Acts, I thought fit to read the "Riot Act". This had the desired effect and there has been a great improvement.

Case (b) was found to be living in a disused barn surrounded by a morass. When the Sanitary Inspector and I first called, we could hardly believe that this was the man's habitation. As he had been befriended by the lady of the manor, he appeared to be in no need of food or clothes. He refused to enter a Welfare Home and continues to live in the barn.

Case (c) was discovered by accident when searching for case (b). He was living in a hut made of tree branches, but although it was mid-winter, he appeared to suffer no ill effects from the elements. He had previously been a patient in a mental hospital.

Case (d) was brought to the County Offices in a car in the hope that I could arrange for her admittance to a Welfare Home. Whilst in the street she proceeded to undress and had to be forcibly restrained. She was certified under the Lunacy Acts and removed to Carmarthen. Later in the day the full story of her escapades became known. Before being brought to the County Offices, she had thrown most of the furniture at her lodgings out of the window!



WATER SUPPLIES

Vigilance was exercised over the water supplies throughout the year. Contaminated supplies were investigated but in no case did the contamination prove to be human in origin. Suitable remedial measures were advised.

GENERAL

Although only slow progress has been made in the sphere of environmental health - a state of affairs over which the Council has no control as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has thought fit to tighten the purse strings - the health of the community, nevertheless, continues to be good.

I. MORGAN WATKIN.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Cardiganshire Joint District Councils,  
Swyddfa'r Sir,  
ABERYSTWYTH.  
June, 1953.



SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE  
YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1952.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938:

Six premises were added to the number registered under Section 14 of the Act for the sale of ice cream.

Samples of ice cream were taken and were of a consistently good standard.

There are no premises in which ice cream is manufactured in the district, all ice cream being brought into the area by wholesale firms for retail sale in the shops.

It is gratifying that a large proportion is pre-packed and contamination due to handling is reduced to the minimum.

FOODS:

There are a large number of cafes and restaurants in Borth and Clarach and these were inspected during the summer season.

Disposal of sewage and sullage water remains the biggest problem as far as those premises are concerned. Every effort was made to assist the owners by cleansing cesspools when they had become full.

A good standard of kitchen hygiene was maintained. This was facilitated by the availability of a piped hot water supply to each cafe.

No complaints were received from the public frequenting the cafes, during the season.

The mobile fish frying canteen continued to ply in the district for the sale of fish and chips. Complaints of smoke emission from the flue of the firebox were received, but the standard of cleanliness of the operator and the canteen was above reproach.

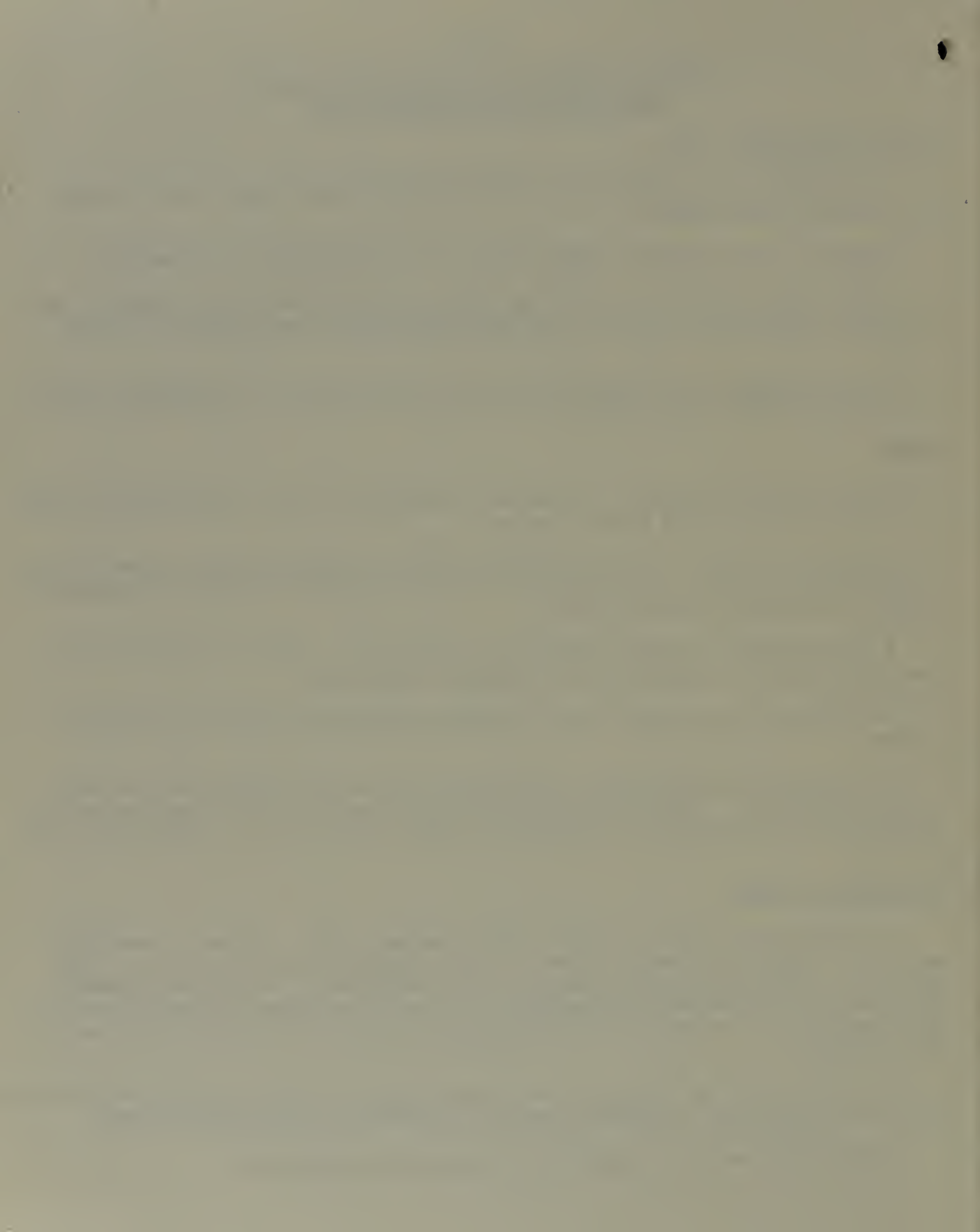
FACTORIES ACT, 1937:

The number of factories in the register remains at 42. Visits of inspection were made to these premises. There are five bakehouses in the register. There are two in Borth; one in Llanrhystyd; one in Llangawsai; and one in Talybont. Improvements long overdue were carried out at one of the Borth bakehouses, and at the bakehouses at Llangawsai and Llanrhystyd, progress was made during the year in this respect.

The standard of the bakehouses was raised during the year, but much still remains to be done in the way of providing sanitary conveniences and general repairs.

Limo-washing every six months was not always done zealously.







### MILK AND DAIRIES:

The control of milk production was in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture.

There is only one milk distributor as defined in the Milk and Dairies Regulations in the area and he is registered with the Council.

Dealers' licences for the sale of Tuberculin Tested and Pasteurized milk were renewed for four applicants.

Samples of these designated milks were taken for analysis.

### HOUSING:

Progress was made by the Council in their housing programme, but the list of applicants wanting accommodation still remains formidable.

Grants under the Housing Act, 1949, were approved for the bringing up to standard of 16 dwellings.

Notices were served on owners of houses to carry out urgent necessary repairs on receipt of complaints from the tenants.

Three houses were demolished under the terms of Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936. Demolition Orders had become operative on these houses which were then demolished by the Council at the owner's expense.

Two further houses were scheduled for demolition and Demolition Orders were made which will become operative as soon as the present occupiers are offered or will obtain suitable alternative accommodation.

### REFUSE DISPOSAL:

House refuse was collected every week or every fortnight in most of the villages in the Council's area. Disposal is by means of controlled tipping at Borth and Llanbadarn. The disposal tip for the refuse collected at Llanrhystyd is not controlled, and is by means of indiscriminate dumping. This has given rise to a very unsightly refuse dump near the roadside at a distance not very far from the village. No complaints were received about this dump, but it is a very unsatisfactory feature of the refuse collection at Llanrhystyd.

The tips were periodically treated for rodent control with highly satisfactory results.

### DITCHES AND WATERCOURSES:

The Council are responsible for the cleansing of certain ditches in the area and the following received attention during the year, viz.,

Llanbadarnfawr Fullbrook;	Borth Leet;
Dolhalog Ditch;	Brynrodyn and Ditches to Aberwennol;
Quebec Ditch;	Llangawsai Ditch;
Doldau Ditch;	Goginan Sewer Outfall Ditch.



There is a system of drainage in Llangawsai and Llanbadarn, which has outfalls in Dolhalog Ditch, Quebec Ditch and Llangawsai Ditch. As a result these ditches were grossly polluted and served as reminders of the great need of a sewerage system in this area.

#### NUISANCES:

A register of complaints was kept and during the year, 141 complaints were entered in this register, and were investigated.

Most of the nuisances were abated on service of preliminary notices and in two cases statutory notices were served.

Number of Inspections .. .. .	241
Statutory Notices Served .. .. .	NIL
Other Notices .. .. .	19
Number of Dwellings made fit as a result of informal action .. .. .	19
Number of Dwellings overcrowded .. .. .	6
Number of persons involved .. .. .	42
Number of cases relieved .. .. .	NIL
Number of houses relieved of overcrowded conditions and which have again become overcrowded .. .. .	NIL
Number of new cases reported .. .. .	NIL

#### DISINFESTATION:

No premises infested with bugs or fleas were reported during the year and no action was required to disinfest any person or property.

#### CAMPING SITES:

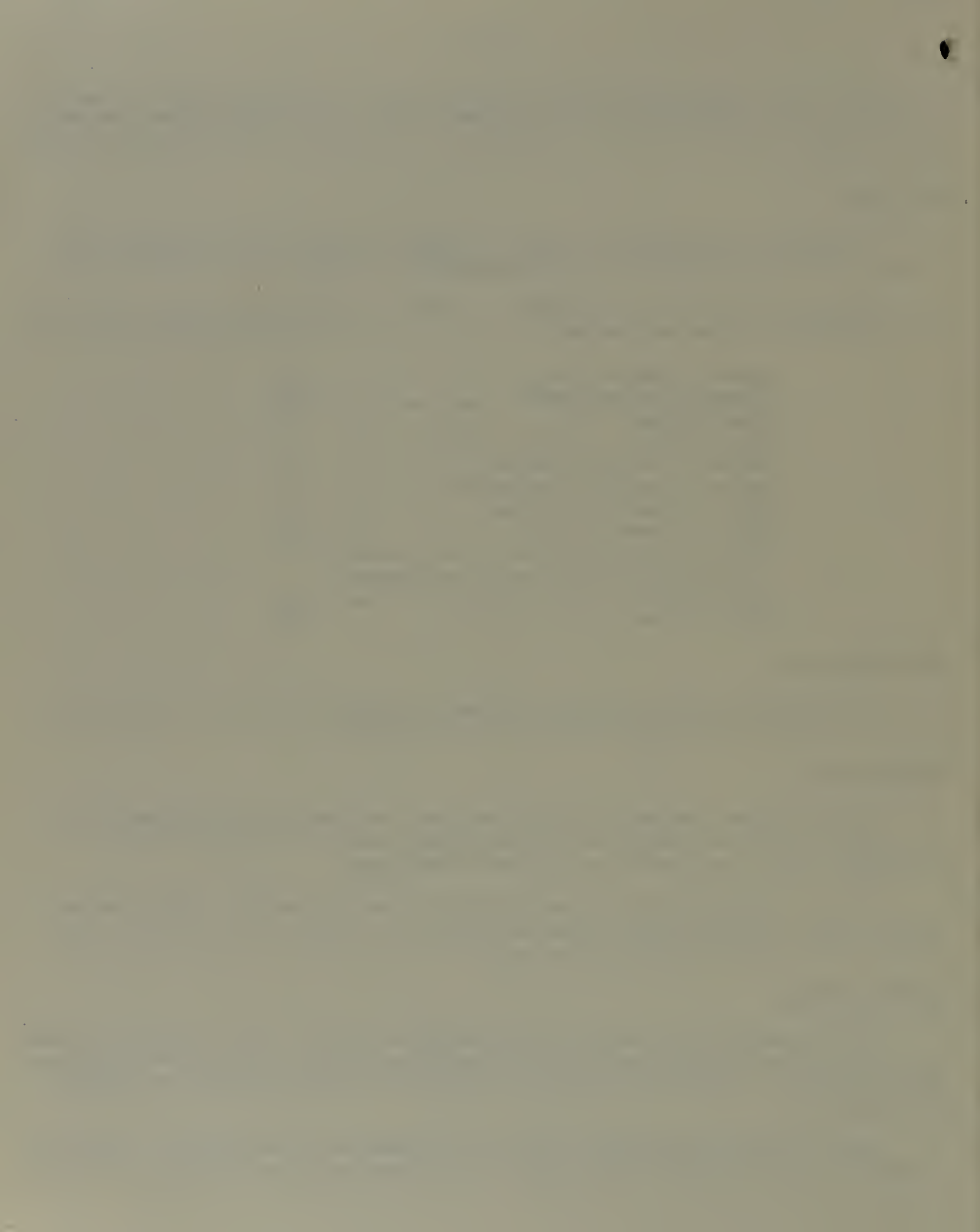
Camping sites situated in Clarach and Borth were regularly inspected during the summer season, and supervised as closely as possible. Complaints were infrequent and not so numerous as in the previous year.

A case of paratyphoid fever was found at a camp in Clarach. The cause was traced to the consumption of a cream bun bought at a cafe and was not due to the water supply or milk supplied to the camp.

#### RODENT CONTROL:

Few complaints were received of infestations of rats. The area was inspected as thoroughly as possible with the staff available and all minor infestations found were dealt with, by pre-baiting using sausage rusk and zinc phosphide and baiting with Warfarin.

The only major infestation in the area treated was at Borth Tip. Treatments at this tip were done four times during the year with very good results.



### WATER SUPPLIES:

All the village schemes were maintained in working order by the Council's Surveyor and extensions to the Northern Division supply mains were carried out from Trerddol to Glandyfi, and from Clarach Cross to Clarach Beach area, and also from Capel Dewi to Cefn Vaenor.

Corroded mains were renewed in a number of villages and small extensions carried out.

Every effort was made to take samples of all village schemes at least once monthly and weekly samples of the Northern Division Supply were taken and submitted for bacteriological analysis. Periodical chemical samples from this supply were also taken to check on the p.H. value of the water so that the treatment could be adjusted accordingly.

All unsatisfactory samples were followed up by field work at the source to remove any foci of pollution which in no case was found to be dangerous.

The Council's consent was given in a number of cases to the use of farm water supplies for domestic purposes following samples being taken and the results examined.

Private supplies were also sampled and taken for analysis, and advisory work done on receiving the results of the analysis.

During the year, 54 samples were taken for bacteriological analysis of Council water supplies, including a number of private supplies.

Progress was made towards obtaining approval of the Ministry to the Southern Division Water Scheme. This scheme envisages the extension of the Craig-y-Pistyll mains from the North to supply practically all the villages in the Southern Division. Final approval was not forthcoming during the year.

### FOODS:

A variety of tinned foods was surrendered by shop keepers for condemnation as being unfit for human consumption.

A quantity of bacon and ham was also condemned.

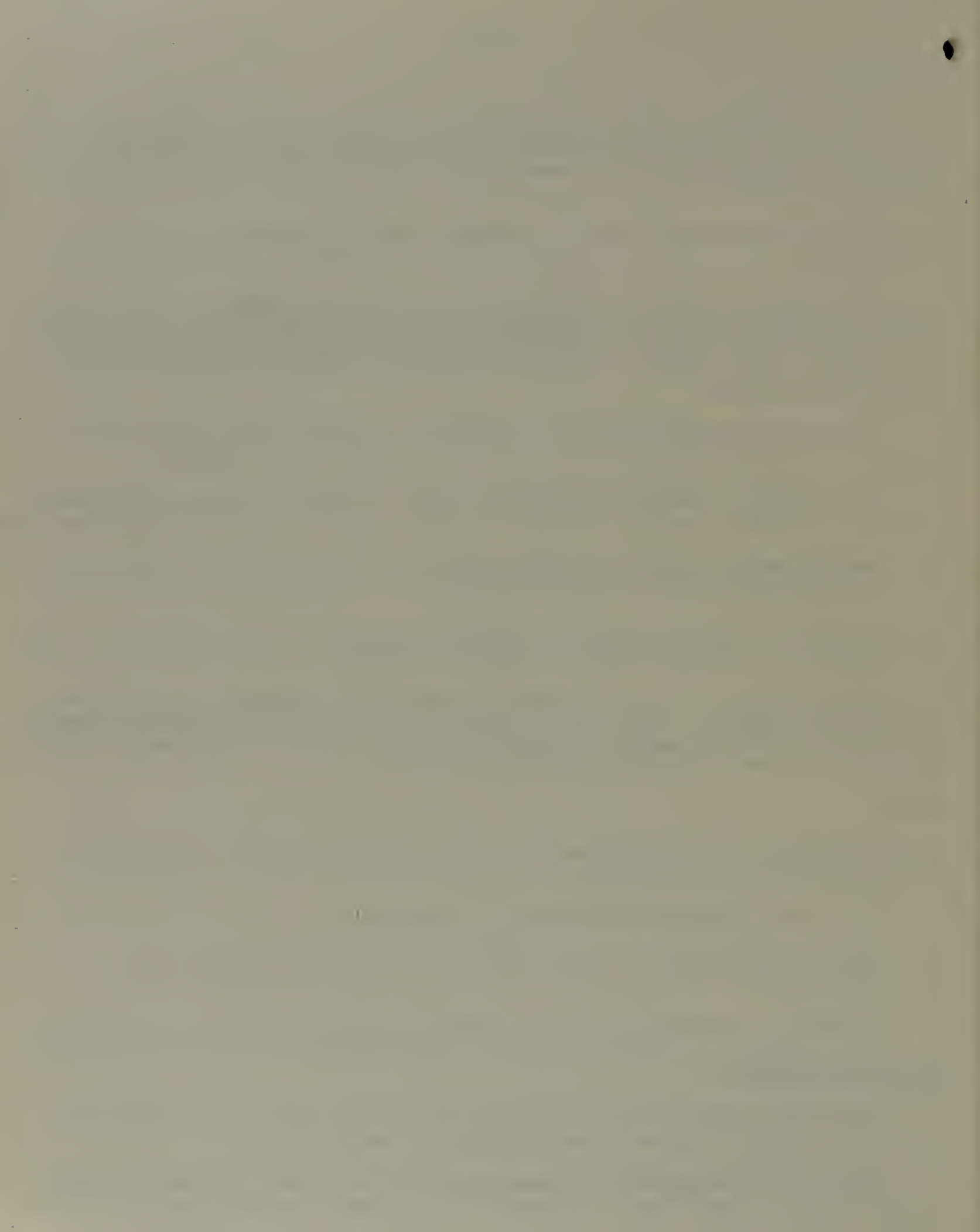
The principal causes for condemnation were blown and rusty tins and decomposition.

No cases of food poisoning were notified nor investigated during the year.

### INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

Infectious fevers were very few and disinfection of rooms and clothing was carried out chiefly in cases of tuberculosis and scarlet fever.

One case of paratyphoid was investigated and the source of infection traced to the eating of a cream bun. No further cases occurred and there was no epidemic.





Investigations were carried out in cases where patients were discharged from Sanatoria to ascertain that all precautions were being taken to prevent the spread of infection, and reports on each case were sent to the County Medical Officer of Health.

PROGRESS REPORT - VILLAGE SEWERAGE SCHEMES:

(a) LLANFARIAN:

This scheme is under construction and is being done by direct labour by the Council's Engineer.

(b) LLANRHYSTYD:

This scheme is being carried out by contract and is nearing completion.

(c) TALYBONT SCHEME:

The Council's Consulting Engineers have submitted plans of a scheme for the village which involves the pumping of the sewage to a disposal works located upstream in a field attached to the Black Lion Hotel. The scheme has not yet been approved by the Ministry.

(d) BORTH SCHEME:

The Council's Consulting Engineers submitted plans of a scheme for this village. A difficulty arose inasmuch as the owner of the land required for locating the disposal works was not prepared to sell it to the Council.

The Engineers are now investigating the possibility of alternative sites suggested by the owner and that is as far as the scheme progressed during the year.

(e) LLANBADARNFAWR SCHEME:

The amended scheme for the village was submitted to the Welsh Office of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and a Public Inquiry was held into the Council's proposals.

The outcome of the Public Inquiry was not made known during the year.

(f) BOW STREET SCHEME:

The Council engaged Consulting Engineers to prepare plans of a sewerage scheme for Bow Street.

The scheme was prepared and submitted to the Ministry who were of the opinion that the cost was too high. With a view to effecting economies a number of properties at present adequately provided with sewerage facilities were omitted from the scheme for the time being. The Council then decided





to sewer their proposed new housing estate at Commins Coch to the disposal works proposed for the Bow Street scheme, and this amended scheme was re-submitted to the Ministry for consideration.

Their approval was not forthcoming during the year.

(g) LLANILAR SCHEME:

The part of the scheme serving the school and Council Housing Estate was operating. The remainder of the scheme incorporating the village is deferred pending the construction of the Southern Division Water Scheme.

(h) CLARACH:

A scheme serving the Council's Housing Estate and houses at the Cross, Clarach, is in operation.

(i) BLAENPIWYF SCHEME:

Plans of the scheme together with all necessary documents were submitted to the Welsh Office of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. A visit was awaited from an Engineering Inspector of the Ministry who is to conduct an investigation into the Council's proposals.

(j) PONTERWYD SCHEME:

Plans of this scheme were in course of preparation by the Council's Surveyor.

(k) DEVIL'S BRIDGE SCHEME:

Plans of this scheme were being prepared by the Council's Surveyor.

The Council contracted for the cleansing of cesspools on application by owners of properties.

Forty one cesspools were cleansed during the year.

The dumping of the contents of pail closets in rivers and streams continued to be a bad feature.

BUILDING LICENSING:

The work of Building Licensing Officer was carried out by the Sanitary Inspector and licences for repairs and improvements of houses were issued as well as private licences for the erection of new houses in the Council's area.



Twenty seven licences for repairs or improvements were issued for the erection of fifteen new houses during the year.

D. G. BOWEN, A.R.S.I.

SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Council Offices,  
Chalybeate Street,  
ABERYSTWYTH.

